

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Panel Meeting
17th June 2009

Present:

Nick Westlake (NW) Chair	Michael Marsh (MM)
Herbie Barlow (HBa)	Bill Potts (BP)
Sheila Lambourne (SL) Vice Chair	Chick Lavender (CL) Treasurer
Barbara McMinnies (BM) Secretary	Robert Gristwood (RG)
Bob Begbie (BB)	Neville Campling (NC)
Marcella Begbie (MB)	Ian MacDonald (IM)
George McMinnies (GM)	Muriel Rawsthorne (MR)
Shelagh Pile (SP)	

Staff: Justine Thompson (JT) – Head of Policy and Community Involvement
 Amber Pullin (AP) – Interim Resident Involvement Officer
 Emma Martin (EM) – Resident Involvement Assistant
 Mark Hickson (MH) – Housing Manager

Observers: Margaret Firth, Tim Rawsthorne, Michael Skinner

Apologies: Linda Wells (LW), Derek Sullivan (DS), Phil Jones (PJ), Sue Cleaver (SC)

1.0	<u>Introductions, apologies and correspondence:</u>	
1.1	NW welcomed everyone to the meeting. BM read the list of apologies and there were no correspondence.	
2.0	<u>Agree and sign the minutes:</u>	
2.1	HBa had an amendment to be made to 3.3. Once this has been made NW will sign the minutes.	
2.2	SP asked what CIG stood for. SL said Customer Involvement Group.	
2.3	5.4 was raised and added to the action table.	
3.0	<u>Justine Thompson Update on the Elections and Improvement Strategy:</u>	
3.1	AP confirmed there has been one nomination for Crown Wood and Forest Park. Ballot papers will be sent out to Hanworth as there are 2 nominations, GM and Alex Coombes. Flyers have also been sent to other areas where the representative is up for re-election. Birch Hill, Priestwood 1, Priestwood 2 and the Housing Sounding Board. AP handed out the latest version of the election update.	
3.2	JT introduced the Continuous Improvement Strategy. The document was discussed page by page. CL asked if we had applied for the TPAS landlord accreditation scheme. JT said we had not, but this could be arranged. CL agreed with not applying. CL proposed a vote, GM seconded; it was a unanimous decision to not apply until next year.	
3.3	Service Standards –	
3.4	NW commented on how he thought the Service Standards were well presented. The documents were discussed page by page.	
3.5	BB said he had never heard of the rent being based on average earnings and property values. JT confirmed this was correct. BM suggested using the formula in the Offer Document to explain the way rent is worked out. BM asked if the 01344 382800 could also be included alongside the 0800 number.	JT

3.6	There were no comments on the lettings standard. There were small grammatical errors in the Customer Involvement standard.
3.7	CL suggested putting Forestcare in the emergency assistance paragraph. The alarm system should be changed to the emergency cord alarm system. BB said he had never seen the complaints policy. CL pointed out some small grammatical errors.
3.8	There was a discussion about landscaping. The Panel felt disappointed that the grass cutting had not improved since October last year. NC mentioned how this issue had also been raised at the Leaseholders Association. SP and MH confirmed Bracknell Forest Homes and Bracknell Forest Council will be working together in the future to eliminate land ownership issues.
4.0	<u>Mark Hickson Town Centre Surgery:</u>
4.1	The document was handed out. NW said he would like all documents that need to be read and understood by the Panel sent out before the meetings.
4.2	MH explained what the Easthampstead House surgery is and the document was discussed page by page.
4.3	The surgery will be reducing its hours and will be open Fridays from 10am to 1pm.
4.4	CL said he was surprised that it had taken this long to reduce the hours due to lack of visitors. BP asked what topics were raised, benefits advice, paying rent and maintenance issues.
4.5	There was a discussion about paying rent in reception. NW informed JT and MH about the importance about keeping the Panel members informed with the correct information and not to undermine their role as elected members.
5.0	<u>Linda Wells Bracknell Forest Homes update:</u>
5.1	JF will be returning from maternity leave in August, but as Policy Officer rather than Customer Involvement Officer. This was a personal decision. The position of Customer Involvement Officer will be advertised this week.
5.2	BM and NW will be attending interviews next week to meet companies who will be conducting customer satisfaction surveys for Bracknell Forest Homes.
5.3	The TSA will be visiting from 21 st – 23 rd July, this will be a form of inspection.
5.4	The Harmans Water Estate Day will be on 25 th June. Youth events will also be held throughout the summer holidays.
5.5	The TSA are holding a meeting next week in London, JT will attend along with CL.
5.6	MH said new CCTV systems have been installed in anti social behaviour (ASB) hot spots. MB asked if the CCTV is mobile, MH said it is. MB said they are having ASB issues in Binfield near the doctor's surgery. MH said unfortunately we would not be able to erect CCTV equipment on land that is not Bracknell Forest Homes.
5.7	Have recently been discussing with staff about taking on specialist subjects such as rent arrears, ASB, etc. BM suggested circulating subjects so all staff members can become involved in all subjects. BM asked if members of staff are happy. MH said staff surveys came back very positive.
5.8	GM asked if Housing Officers would be changing areas. MH said they will be eventually but there has been a lot for officers to deal with at the moment. The handover would take a lot of work.

6.0	<u>Chick Lavender Expenses:</u>
6.1	A document was handed out. CL said the accounts were audited in April and the document was produced as a result.
6.2	CL explained the new mileage rates and carers allowance. CL gave an example of where expenses were claimed from 2006 and was able to be paid correctly.
6.3	CL suggested a fixed period of 3 months for expense forms to be valid. CL proposed, HB seconded and the vote was unanimous.
6.4	RG asked about income and expenditure. HB asked about broadband. BM said broadband would be paid from Bracknell Forest Homes not the Panel. Panel members can claim up to £15 for broadband each month. CL said if panel members do claim £15 a month for broadband and receive benefits, then they should check with the benefits advisor to make sure that it is acceptable.
7.0	<u>Feedback from other meetings:</u>
7.1	Leaseholders- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were concerns about security and anti social behaviour. NC suggested CCTV. • A sub committee has been created to work on the leaseholder's handbook. A schedule has been created so that deadlines can be met. • There was discussion about access to Spotlight. Non service charge paying leaseholders do not receive it. CL was concerned these customers are not finding out important information. NC and AP said we are currently working on an email system where Spotlight can be emailed directly to these customers.
7.2	Customer Involvement Group – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP went through the Impact Assessment and what it meant. It is a TSA requirement. The group were asked what they had achieved over the last year. The tenant handbook, void standards, policies, leaflets, etc. Estate walkabouts were also considered. • A voids inspection update was given. It was suggested that customers visit the voids alone without officers, but this was not viable due to health and safety reasons. • There were five nominations for chair. One nominee attended, the group voted and the decision was unanimous. Ian MacDonald is the Customer Involvement Group Chair.
7.3	SL also said she had recently attended a Chairs Networking Group with CL. Data protection and customer incentives for getting involved were discussed.
7.4	SSRA - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Harding from the CAB attended the last meeting. • There were also concerns about landscaping. • A representative from Swan House spoke of an incident whereby a tenant was charged £40 for having a light bulb replaced. The SSRA thought this was appalling as the handyperson should have been sent to do the job for free.
8.0	<u>Referrals and Any Other Business:</u>
8.1	CL mentioned a customer in Harmans Water with landscaping issues that have been going on since the beginning of May. The issue has been reported several times and has not been resolved. Ref 10634.
8.2	SP asked the date of the Harmans Water Estate Day and asked for an invite. SP asked about policies regarding the number of children in a household.
8.3	BM suggested observers should sit at the table. BP said officers and observers should also have name plates, 15 panel members agreed, 2 abstained.

<u>Tenant Board Member Questions and Answers:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RG asked can you differentiate between being a Board member and being a tenant. MS said in his current job he has to make decisions that benefit all parties involved and he would like to do the same for customers and Bracknell Forest Homes. • MR asked if MS had any children and does he have time to commit to becoming a board member. MS said he does not have any children, and has been in long talks with work about being able to commit to Bracknell Forest Homes and they fully support him. MS will make time for Board duties. • MS mentioned he had, had an excellent experience with Bracknell Forest Homes and CL asked what the experience was. MS said he had moved into Bracknell in February 2009, the property was immaculate and very clean, the moving process was very smooth and the customer service received from members of staff was excellent. • BM said that there is a lot of paperwork, meetings and involvement to take into consideration. MS said AP and JT had briefed him on the amount of involvement and is fully aware. • TR asked if the IT Company MS is employed by, are related to Bracknell Forest Homes in anyway. MS said they are not. • MS asked how long had MS lived in Bracknell. MS said he has lived locally, but has only lived in Bracknell since February. • HB asked if MS was quite ready to become so involved having only lived here for a few months. MS said yes he would like to give back as good a service as he had received from Bracknell Forest Homes. • GM asked how old are you, what area do you live in, where do you work and are you willing to give 110% of your time. MS said he is 40, lives in Hanworth, works in Camberley and is fully committed to giving as much of his time as needed and more. • NW said how he and BM have the advantage over other board members of being Tenant and Leaseholder Panel members too and are aware of what customers and panel representatives think about certain issues. MR suggested MS attending the panel meetings as an observer; MS agreed this was a good idea. 	

Actions Table

Date of meeting	Issue	Action	Progress	Lead
20/11/08	TR was questioning that there is no money available at present for major structural repairs.	TR has taken this up with LW.	17/06/09 – MR will take the lead on this point from TR. MR will contact LW.	MR
29/10/08	SP discussed a T.V. aerial issue at Dennis Pilcher House.	LW said this will be RACE communications and as previously mentioned their contract is being reviewed.	Ongoing – 17/06/09 Mike Jones is unravelling the arrangement between the Council and RACE. LW to liaise with Mike Jones for update.	Mike Jones
11/03/09	Update on Election process. How are we doing on the election for these specific areas?	GM and Alex Coombes– Hanworth MR – Binfield	Ongoing – 17/06/09 Ballot papers for Hanworth will be sent out for customers to vote.	AP
15/05/09	IM asked about brick wall structures throughout Great Hollands	IM to liaise with LW	Ongoing - 17/06/09 IM to provide details to LW.	IM
17/06/09	Review the Compact	JF to conduct review.	Ongoing – 17/06/09	JF